

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration of the objections and rejections that are contained in the Office Action of January 7, 2009 is respectfully requested.

It is initially noted that a number of minor editorial changes have been made to the specification and abstract so as to place the application into a form more consistent with U.S. practice. Such changes should address the formal issues that have been raised by the Examiner.

In particular, it is noted that the Examiner did not consider the application to contain an abstract. While an abstract was submitted as part of the International Application papers, it has been resubmitted with some editorial changes on a separate sheet herewith.

The changes that have been made to the specification are largely editorial in nature. No new matter has been entered.

By the above amendments, original claims 1-21 have been canceled without prejudice and replaced with new claims 22-42, respectively. The new claims have been drafted in a manner so as to address or avoid the various issues that the Examiner has raised under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph in section 6 on pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

In particular, the Examiner's issues regarding the preamble, the language "by means of", and the quotation mark in the claim have been addressed.

While the phrase "adapted to swing relative to said chassis" is no longer used in the claim, it is submitted that such language is not indefinite. While the Examiner does not consider it clear in which direction the carriage is to swing, this is not necessarily a lack of clarity of the scope of the claim. That is, the claim may simply be broad in not specifying the direction of swinging, but not indefinite. It is in any case noted that new independent claim 2 recites that the carriage is able to swing relative to the chassis about a swinging axis that is inclined relative to the supporting surface, and that the swinging axis lie substantially on a medial longitudinal plane of the chassis.

The recitation of the support axes has been made clear to state that the support axes are substantially parallel to a plane that includes the longitudinal axis of the chassis and that is perpendicular to the medial longitudinal plane of the chassis.

The term "i.e." in claim 2 has been removed from new claim 23.

Regarding claim 20, this claim recited a sports article that comprises the steering device of claim 22. Thus, the claim further limits the steering device of claim 22 by requiring the steering device to be part of a sports article, as opposed to “for” a sports article as recited in the preamble of claim 22. Thus, this language has been carried through to new dependent claim 41.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-8 and 20 as being anticipated by Schultz, U.S. Patent 1,157,049. Claim 21 was rejected by the Examiner as being unpatentable over Schultz and in further view of Meyer, U.S. Patent 2,998,260. However, the Examiner also went on to indicate that claims 9-19 would be allowable if redrafted to overcome the formal rejections.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication of allowable subject matter. New independent claim 22 is the only independent claim pending in the application. This claim includes the features of prior independent claim 1, but also some of the aspects of dependent claim 9, considered allowable by the Examiner.

Specifically, independent claim 9 required that there would be first and second carriages in correspondence with end portions of the chassis, each such carriage supporting a pair of the supporting and sliding elements. Claim 22 now recites that the steering device has at least one carriage that has two of the supporting and sliding or rolling elements provided in an in-line arrangement. Further, the carriage is provided at an end portion of the chassis. Further, the two of the supporting and sliding or rolling elements have respective support axes that are provided on opposite sides of a swinging center of the carriage with respect to the chassis, with respect to the longitudinal axis of the chassis.

For example, noting Fig. 1 of the present application, the carriage 6a has a swinging center 27. The support axes 25 and 26 for respective wheels 3 are on opposite sides of the swinging center 27 with respect to the longitudinal direction of the chassis 5.

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that Schultz included a carriage 9, and that at least two of the supporting and sliding elements were supported by the carriage at respective support axes 8. However, as is clear from viewing the drawings of Schultz, as well as reading the description of Schultz, each carriage 9 of Schultz carries a single wheel 7.

Further, it is clear that Schultz further cannot meet the limitation of the respective support axes of the at least two wheels on a single carriage being on opposite longitudinal sides of the swinging center of that carriage with respect to the chassis. Schultz obviously only shows a single wheel for each carriage, and thus does not have two support axes which could be provided on opposite sides of the swinging center.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 22 clearly defines over Schultz, and indication of such respectfully requested. While there are further distinctions in the dependent claims, it is not necessary at this point to go into these further details in view of the clear distinction presented by independent claim 22. For the same reason, further discussion of the secondary reference to Meyer is not necessary at this point.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims that are pending in the present application at this point clearly define over the prior art that has been cited by the Examiner. Indication of such is respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is requested to pass the case to issue. If the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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